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REPORT (PART II)

ON

NATIVE-OWNED ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS IN BENGAL

FOR THE

Week ending Saturday, 24th January 1903.

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II.—Home Administration.

(*d*)—*Education.*

99. The *Bengalee* understands that the Government of Bombay has invited the Senate of the Bombay University to submit its opinion on the Report of the Universities Commission. It presumes the Government of Bengal will follow this precedent. Surely, if any public body has a right to express an opinion on the Report of the Universities Commission, it is a body like the Senate of the Calcutta University.

The Government and the Universities Commission.

Bengalee, 22nd Jan. 1903.

100. The *Indian Mirror* hoped to have heard the last of the fatuous Report of the Universities Commission, but the honour conferred on the President, Mr. Raleigh, and his reappointment as Vice-Chancellor, coupled with the omission of Mr. Justice Banerji's name from the Coronation Honours List, show that Lord Curzon's Government will after all pursue its course towards the "Reforms," on its own pre-conceived lines. It appears almost certain that Lord Curzon will return to the charge on his own previous commandeering tactics by which the State will become the sole proprietor of educational rights and educational institutions.

Impending University "Reforms."

Indian Mirror, 22nd Jan. 1903.

The Report of the Commission has been referred to Local Governments and the *Mirror* understands that the Bengal Government has invited the opinion of a Bengali gentleman (Babu Sarada Churn Mitter), a Behari gentleman (Babu Saligram Singh), and an Uriya gentleman (Babu M. Das). Though they are good and true, the country will strenuously refuse to accept their suggestions and recommendations as final and binding. If this method be adopted everywhere, no good will result, and since it is a matter of life and death, it behoves the Government to gather public opinion through other than official channels.

(*g*)—*Railways and Communcations including Canals and Irrigation.*

101. The *Bengalee* strongly advocates the adoption of the alignment of the Murshidabad Branch of the Eastern Bengal State Railway *vid* Santipur set forth in the memorial to Lord Curzon. Santipur is the most populous and the only industrial and manufacturing town in Nadia. Its imports are as large as its exports, and the heavy goods traffic of this place alone makes the steamer line so highly profitable in spite of the numerous country boats, carts and other modes of conveyance. The river is however receding southward and becoming more and more impassable for steamers, and the commerce of the town would receive its death-blow in the near future if it were not incorporated in the present railway scheme. Among other reasons it is urged that the passenger traffic is ordinarily heavy and the place is sacred to both Hindus and Muhammadans alike. Government was once memorialized years ago when the shorter route *vid* Ula had been first chosen. Then Sir Richard Temple not only preferred the Santipur route, but had more than 20 miles of earthwork for the Ranaghat-Bhagawangola Railway constructed *vid* Santipur. In abandoning the old alignment more money will be unnecessarily spent, and although the line would be shorter by three miles, the cost of construction is likely to be the same.

The Murshidabad Branch of the Eastern Bengal State Railway.

Bengalee, 22nd Jan. 1903.

(*h*)—*General.*

102. The *Indian Mirror* thus comments upon the ovation received by the 9th Lancers at the Coronation Review at Delhi from the Europeans, including officials, and the Viceroy's guests, while His Excellency looked on helplessly; as also upon the murder of some Indian policemen by yet another British Regiment subsequent to the demonstration in question:—

"If the military thus go out of hand, and may commit any outrage with impunity, and if the civil white population, both official and non-official, abet them, where is the security of the British Empire in India? Refractory whites have been pampered too long, and have become a standing menace not only

Lord Curzon and outrages by soldiers.

Indian Mirror. 17th Jan. 1903.

to our people, but also to Government itself. For the sake of the Empire, then, as much as for his own, this is just the occasion when the Viceroy should be both just and fearless. In Lord Kitchener he will also find a just and fearless colleague."

BENGALEE, 18th Jan. 1903.

The Darbar and the Indian Princes.

103. The *Bengalee* asserts that, although they may not speak out, it would be difficult to believe that the Indian Princes and Nobles have not felt insulted by the way in which they have been treated by the representative of the Paramount Power, before all the world, at these Coronation functions. The elephant procession, the seats assigned to them at the amphitheatre, the withdrawal from them of the customary salutes, and the omission of the ceremonial visits by the Viceroy to them, all these have been felt, as an indignity, if not by all at least by the more sensitive among the Indian Princes and Chiefs gathered at Delhi.

INDIAN MIRROR, 19th Jan. 1903.

The Coronation Darbar.

104. Newspaper accounts of the Darbar, writes the *Indian Nation*, err on the side of flattery owing to the Press having been the Viceroy's special pet; but the want of comfort and due attention experienced by large numbers of guests, forms the subject of general complaint. The Indians fared worst, and few of them seemed to have felt perfectly happy at the Darbar. This is attributed to the spirit of the Queen's Proclamation not being carried into practice, and for once all distinction between Natives and Europeans not being swept away. Neither the kindest declarations nor the most beneficent acts of Government will avail to endear it to the people if individual Englishmen in their daily life are rude in speech and unjust or unkind in behaviour to the children of the soil.

BENGALEE, 20th Jan. 1903.

A consolation appointment.

105. The following is taken from the *Bengalee*:—

"Mr. Bourdillon's appointment as Resident in Mysore affords one more illustration, if indeed such were needed, of the Viceroy's unconquerable propensity for springing dramatic surprises upon the people. The Acting Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal can, however, hardly be congratulated on his admission into the charmed circle of the 'purple Political,' happening, as it does, almost on the eve of his retirement from this country and following, as it does, his unmerited ousting by Sir Andrew Fraser from the satrapy of Bengal."

INDIAN MIRROR 20th Jan. 1903.

The effects of the Delhi Durbar.

106. The *Indian Empire* compares the result achieved by the Durbar with the proverbial mountain in labour, and states that the whole thing was a huge waste of money and energy. It has been absolutely barren of any beneficial results.

The release of the princes from payment of interest on loans from Government was announced with an extremely bad grace on the occasion, as it humiliated them before both Indians and Europeans by making known the encumbered state of their finances. Lord Curzon has exposed the rags of penury under the bejewelled garments of most of the princes, and the people have got absolutely nothing beyond a vague promise of some financial relief, provided the finances continue in the present flourishing condition.

The journal regrets the wrong impression of India's wealth conveyed to the European and American guests and visitors, by the brilliancy and splendour of the functions, as no amount of pathetic appeal on behalf of the famine-stricken Indians will induce them in future to open their purse-strings.

BENGALEE, 20th Jan. 1903.

The Viceroy's speech at Gaya.

107. Criticising Lord Curzon's speech at Gaya and the comparison instituted by His Excellency between the empire of Asoka and that of England in India, the *Bengalee* says it is to be borne in mind that the British Government has the enormous advantage of the progress of two thousand years behind it. To compare the justice and liberality of a Government two thousand years old, when humanity was still in its infancy and when our ideas of government and society were still in the rude and patriarchal stage, is really to give the palm of honour to the older Government.

The journal admits the claim of the British Government for liberality and humanity, and even as regards its claim for justice as between man and man and when Indians are concerned. But as regards its claims for justice when the issue is between Europeans and Indians, history will challenge its claim and deny its right to it, though it must be thankfully admitted that the whole

trend of Lord Curzon's personal efforts has been in the direction of equal justice between Europeans and Indians in this country.

Then, again, as regards that justice to communities and nations, justice to their ever-growing and legitimate aspirations, the *Bengalee* finds the Government of Lord Curzon singularly wanting. His Excellency is apt to ignore the present in his fervid worship of the past.

BENGALEE, 21st Jan. 1903.

108. Referring to the difference in the reception accorded to the Viceroy in the two Press Camps at the Delhi Darbar, the *Bengalee* condemns the action of the Native Press in presenting a formal address, and points out that the initiative in this movement came from the representatives of other provinces who had privately drafted the address and sent it to the Viceroy. Thus many had to join to avoid a public scandal, and it is suggested to publish the names of those who placed the Indian Press representatives, as a body, in this false position.

The Press Representatives' address to the Viceroy.

BENGALEE, 21st Jan. 1903.

109. The *Bengalee* very strongly condemns the policy of the Indian Government whose one aim and object for the last thirty or forty years has been to reduce the strength, curtail the freedom, and lower the dignity of the hereditary chiefs and nobles of India. The assumption of the Imperial title had clearly this end in view, for by bloodless methods it has been gradually leading to the assimilation of the Indian principalities into the mighty Indian Empire of Britain.

The Indian Princes at the Darbar.

The policy of reducing the Indian Princes and Chiefs to the position of a class of superior aristocracy has, however, received almost its final stroke and culmination in the present Darbar. The elephant procession reduced them from the old and treaty-status of allies to that of vassals of the Empire, and their only compensation lay in the fact that even H. R. H. the Duke of Connaught was preceded by a commoner and a mere subject, though occupying a high official position for the time being. The arrangements within the amphitheatre likewise showed that the Chiefs were regarded as British subjects occupying a little higher position than what is enjoyed by the zamindars in British territory. In fact they were never once referred to by the Viceroy as "allies" of the Emperor, and from the Nizam's address, Lord Curzon might take a hint as to how the omission of the word "allies" from his speech was likely to be interpreted by the Indian Chiefs. The impression left on the minds of the latter is that the Darbar was meant as much to proclaim the glory of the empire as to proclaim their own unquestioned vassalage.

BENGALEE, 22nd Jan. 1903.

110. The Delhi Darbar, says the *Bengalee*, did doubtless outrival the old Empire of Delhi in its wild and barbaric magnificence, but if those Oriental Emperors were barbaric, they at least knew how to be magnanimous though not perhaps always equally just. The offer of the Indian Government to remit for three years the interest on famine loans given to Indian princes is neither just nor generous, as in no sense can it be an adequate compensation for all that the princes and feudatories have had to sacrifice at the altar of loyalty.

The Darbar bounty to the Indian Princes.

BENGALEE, 22nd Jan. 1903.

111. Referring to the anticipated vacancy of the Collectorship of Calcutta, the *Bengalee* trusts that the appointment will be given to a member of the Provincial Executive Service, as it is one of the few prize appointments to which members of that service legitimately aspire.

The Collectorship of Calcutta.

The journal is sure that Mr. Bourdillon will resolutely set his face against any attempt made to give the post to an outsider.

III.—LEGISLATION.

INDIAN EMPIRE, 20th Jan. 1903.

112. On the occasion of the presentation of an address to Lord Curzon when he visited their camp at the Delhi Darbar, the Native Press, says the *Indian Empire*, lost an opportunity to make known their grievances and enlist the sympathy of a sympathetic Viceroy in removing at least some of them. This was realized later, and a small committee from among the Press representatives was appointed to memorialise the Viceroy.

The law of sedition.

The law of sedition is pronounced by the journal to be the principal disadvantage under which a native editor works, and it enters into a detailed examination of section 124A of the Indian Penal Code, which Mr. Chalmers' amendment has made as vague as possible.

In the first explanation apperded to the section, the Legislature makes a mock attempt to define the term "disaffection," on which turns the whole question of sedition, and really leaves it to be done by the sweet will of every Judge. This was demonstrated in the ludicrous and unjust interpretation of the word by the late Mr. Justice Strachey in the famous Tilak case.

The second explanation is also very defective, since it provides that "comments expressing disapprobation of the measures of Government (when made) with a view to obtain their alteration by lawful means . . . . do not constitute an offence under this section." Thus if a person indulges in a little reasonable criticism and goes no further, he does not get the benefit of the explanation. The English law of sedition expresses affirmatively what the Indian legislators made a great blunder in attempting to do negatively, since the negative of the Indian Code is not the obverse of the positive.

No difference is found between the terms "measures" and "action" referred to in the second and third explanations. The Legislature has put the matter in the most round-about way and made the present law like a two-edged sword.

VI.—Miscellaneous.

Bengalee, 18th Jan. 1903.

Indians in South Africa.

113. The *Bengalee* says that the treatment meted out to the Indian Colonists of South Africa was one of the causes which led Britain to draw her sword against the Boers. In the war which is now over, India helped Britain in achieving victory. But what about the promised amelioration of the condition of the Indians in South Africa? According to Mr. Chamberlain, the Indian is to be left very much where he was before, while every possible favour is to be shown to the Boer. So much for the charity, so much for the justice of the Occident!

Indian Mirror, 18th Jan. 1903.

Ibid.

114. With reference to Mr. Chamberlain's action with regard to the exclusion of Indians from South Africa as undesirable immigrants, the *Indian Mirror* says:—"It remains to be seen what action Lord Curzon's Government means to take in the matter. Like Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Curzon is a forceful man too. At the Delhi Durbar he proclaimed to the whole world the glory and majesty of India. He dwelt upon fair and righteous dealing, and so on. We have then reason to expect that Lord Curzon will not sit silent under the insult that Indians are undesirable, whether in South Africa or other parts of the British Empire. If the insult were borne, Lord Curzon as Viceroy of India would be shorn of the best part of the importance and dignity of his office."

Bengalee, 21st Jan. 1903.

The late Prince of Arcot.

115. Commenting on the death of the late Prince of Arcot, the *Bengalee* asks Lord Curzon to order a competent and public enquiry into the circumstances connected with it. Somebody must have been told off to supervise the Nawab's camp, and it is simply surprising how (*i*) he was permitted to go out to the Proclamation Darbar while suffering from so serious an illness as congestion of the lungs; and (*ii*) how, simply because he wished it, he was permitted to start for Madras when, considering the serious nature of his illness, no sane medical man would allow him to do so. The public have a right to know if proper medical attendance and advice were provided and, if so, the medical man who permitted these outrageous indiscretions must be held responsible for his negligence.

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